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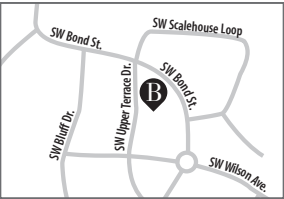
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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

COVID-19 data for Aug. 6

Deschutes County cases: 10,880 (54 new cases)
Deschutes County deaths: 87 (zero new deaths)
Crook County cases: 1,479 (10 new cases)
Crook County deaths: 24 (zero new deaths)

Jefferson County cases: 2,547 (7 new cases)
Jefferson County deaths: 42 (zero new deaths)
Oregon cases: 226,899 (970 new cases)
Oregon deaths: 2,889 (4 new deaths)
COVID-19 patients hospitalized at St. Charles Bend on Friday: 32 (3 in ICU)

The Bulletin had been tracking the seven-day average case count based on state data since local coronavirus cases were first reported in March of last year. Starting with the July Fourth weekend, the state stopped providing county-level data for weekends or holidays. When data is available, The Bulletin will continue to publish information about the pandemic.

Transparency issues surround bill ending proficiency requirements

BY HILLARY BORRUD
The Oregonian

For the next five years, an Oregon high school diploma will be no guarantee that the student who earned it can read, write or do math at a high school level.

Gov. Kate Brown had demurred earlier this summer regarding whether she supported the plan passed by the Legislature to drop the requirement that students demonstrate they have achieved those essential skills. But on July 14, the governor signed Senate Bill 744 into law.

Through a spokesperson, the governor declined again Friday to comment on the law and why she supported suspending the proficiency requirements.

Brown's decision was not public until recently, because her office did not hold a signing ceremony or issue a press release and the fact that the

Charles Boyle, the governor's deputy communications director, wrote in an emailed statement that suspending the reading, writing and math proficiency requirements while the state develops new graduation standards will benefit "Oregon's Black, Latino, Latina, Latinx, Indigenous, Asian, Pacific Islander, Tribal, and students of color."

governor signed the bill was not entered into the legislative database until July 29, a departure from the normal practice of updating the public database the same day a bill is signed.

The Oregonian asked the governor's office when Brown's staff notified the Legislature that she had signed the bill. Charles Boyle, the governor's deputy communications director, declined to answer.

Boyle wrote in an emailed statement that suspending the reading, writing and math proficiency requirements while the state develops new graduation standards will benefit

Most of those courses have been discontinued since the skills requirement was paused during the pandemic before lawmakers killed it entirely.

Democrats in the legislature overwhelmingly supported ending the longtime proficiency requirement, while Republicans criticized it as a lowering of academic standards. A couple lawmakers crossed party lines on the votes.

Proponents said the state needed to pause Oregon's high school graduation requirements, in place since 2009 but already suspended during the pandemic, until at least the class of 2024 graduates in order for leaders to reexamine its graduation requirements.

Much of the criticism of the graduation requirements was targeted at standardized tests. Yet Oregon, unlike many other states, did not require students to pass a particular standardized test or any test at all. Stu-

dents could demonstrate their ability to use English and do math via about five different tests or by completing an in-depth classroom project judged by their own teachers.

A variety of factors appear to have led to the lack of transparency around the governor's bill signing decisions this summer. Secretary of the Senate Lori Bocker said a key staffer who deals with the governor's office was experiencing medical issues during the 15-day period between when Brown signed Senate Bill 744 and the public database was updated to reflect that. By the time legislative staff belatedly entered the information into the bill database on July 29, the software vendor had shut off bill updates to members of the media and the public who had requested them. They cut it off because of a July 21 system malfunction, said legislative information services Systems Architect Bill Sweeney.

Police: Medford school custodian who planned attack is in custody

Man alleged to take 'significant steps' toward planning a 'mass casualty event'

The Associated Press

MEDFORD — A custodian at a high school in Medford faces felony charges after police say he took "significant steps" toward planning a "mass casualty event" — including one at South Medford High School, where he worked.

The Mail Tribune reports Kristopher Wayne Clay, 24, is in the Jackson County Jail on charges surrounding a cache of guns, ammunition and handwritten manifestos found at three locations in Jackson County.

Authorities say Clay obtained multiple rifles two years after courts prohibited him from owning firearms.

Clay began working as a custodian for the school starting in February until an investigation that began July 20, when authorities say he came into the Medford police lobby, asked to talk to an officer and confessed to having homicidal thoughts and plans to carry out an attack.

The officer placed him under a mental health hold, and transported Clay to Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center's behavioral health unit.

Police place a person under a mental health hold when the individual poses a danger to themselves or others, according to Medford police Lt. Mike Budreau. From there they typically admit a person to the hospital's behavioral health ward and leave the case to mental health experts.

"In this particular case, we believe that he'd taken some pretty significant steps to carry out his plan," Budreau said.

Budreau called it "unfortunate" that Clay had to be fully prosecuted, because Clay prevented himself from carrying out his plans by contacting

police.

"Had he not come forward, who knows what could have happened?" Budreau said.

Clay made his initial appearance Thursday in Jackson County Circuit Court on felony charges of attempted second-degree murder, attempted second-degree assault, unlawful use of a weapon, and misdemeanor counts of unlawfully possessing a firearm and tampering with physical evidence accusing him of damaging or destroying a journal he kept at the hospital.

Judge Laura Cromwell ordered no early release unless Clay posts a 10% bond on bail set at \$2 million. Efforts to reach an attorney for Clay weren't immediately successful.

Medford School District terminated Clay's employment, according to Hurd, and the school district is working closely with Medford police School Resource Officers.

BOARDMAN-HEMINGWAY

Judge rejects challenge to transmission-line project

BY MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

A federal judge has rejected arguments by opponents of a 300-mile transmission line in Eastern Oregon who sought to stop the project for allegedly violating environmental laws.

U.S. District Judge Michael Simon has determined the U.S. Bureau of Land Management approved a right-of-way across public land for the project in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Federal Lands Policy Management Act.

The Stop B2H Coalition and other plaintiffs filed a complaint in 2019 stating the transmission line between Boardman and the Hemingway substation in Idaho should have been more closely scrutinized for impacts to the greater sage grouse and other factors.

The proposal has also stirred controversy for taking farmland out of production and disrupting agricultural



EO Media Group File

A crew works on a transmission line tower outside Boardman. A federal judge has rejected a lawsuit seeking to invalidate the government's right-of-way for the Boardman-to-Hemingway transmission line across public land.

practices, such as aerial pesticide spraying.

The lawsuit argued that BLM should have updated its environmental analysis of the project — known as a final environmental impact statement or FEIS — with new information about sage grouse populations, which have plum-

meted from historic levels.

While studies completed after the project's approval provided new information about population counts and the effects of transmission lines, the judge said they're "not significant or seriously different" enough to warrant a supplementary analysis.

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